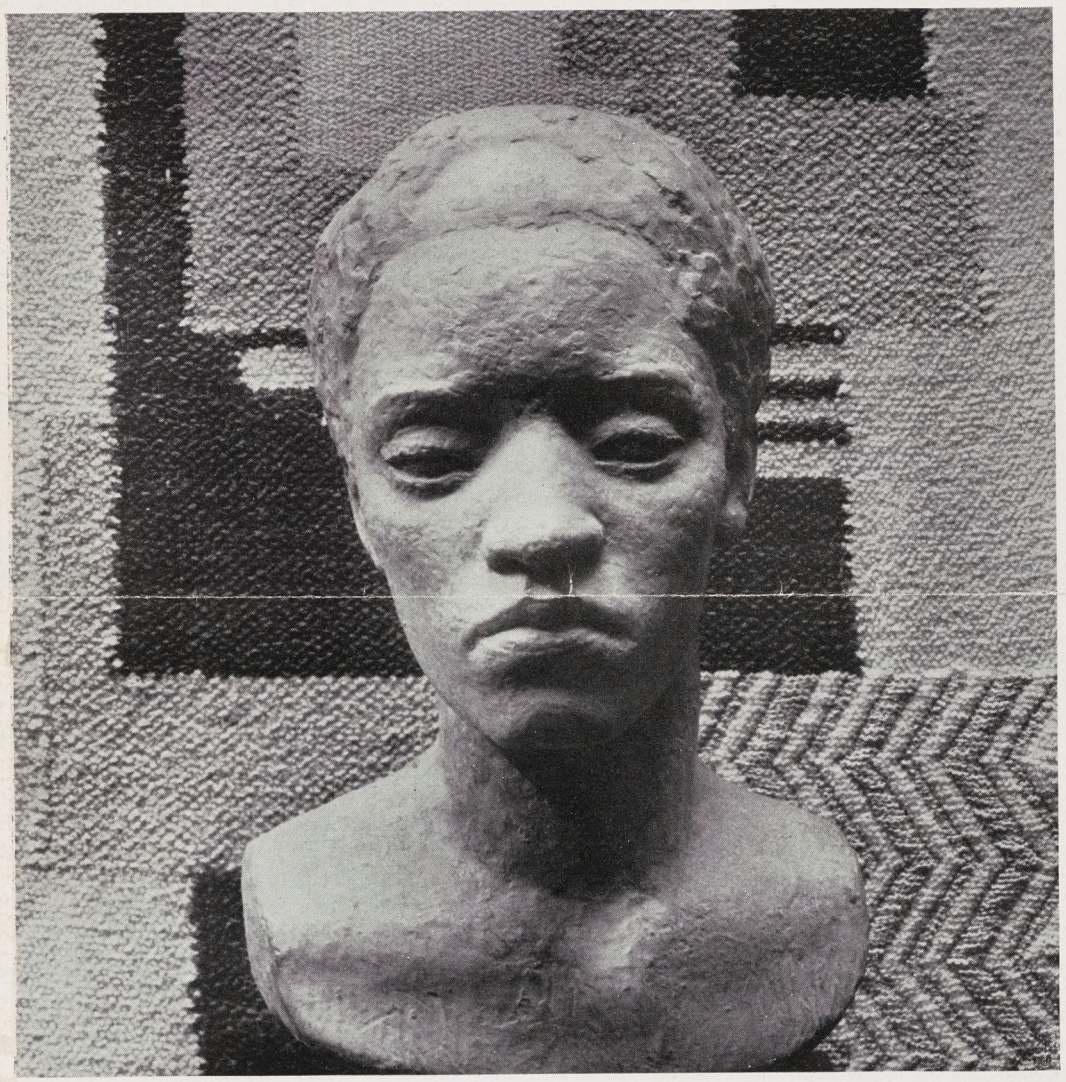
SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION
BULLETIN

VOL. 2 MARCH, 1936 No. 10



—*Photo Horace Bristol*

HAND-WOVEN TEXTILE *by Dorothy Liebes.* SCULPTURE *by Raymond Puccinelli.* Shown at Art Center.

California Creates

By GLADYS TILDEN

NOTE: The author of the following article is the daughter of the late Douglas Tilden, distinguished California sculptor. She has resided in Paris for eight years as managing editor of "Vogue's" Paris office.

California has Hollywood to thank for making Easterners (and even Europeans) conscious that "somethin' is goin' on" out here. But is all the world aware that, besides the glamorous clothes, costumes and decorations created for the movies, there is a definite movement toward creative work in all lines developing throughout the state?

Anyone sensitive to the creative spirit knows that Paris creates, but a long residence in that

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city teaches one to appreciate the atmosphere in which such creative work is carried on. The very air seems to give off generative power to produce beautiful things.

In New York you sense somewhat the same atmosphere—for a while, at least—and there you have the added value of publicity to bring native talent before the public eye.

In California, the creative atmosphere is so strong it is enough to make one reel. California has to create. It cannot help itself!

Even as Paris and New York, it is easy to believe San Francisco the next most logical creative center. Here, there is already much going on, there is as much endeavor as elsewhere, and for it there must be a tremendous future.

There lack two essentials at the present time: wide publicity for those who have reached the top and for those who are nearing the top and who need support and encouragement; secondly, the market or supply of materials for the coming-uppers to work on is still much too limited.

San Francisco is building up an unmatched tradition—Oriental, Spanish, pioneer, American. (Paris depends on its traditions going back through the centuries; New York counts on both Europe and America for its inspirations.) Certainly, the creative spirit permeates everywhere, both in San Francisco and in Los Angeles, where so many strides have already been made along the lines under discussion. Above all, there is a consciousness of the need and an eagerness to make already existent talent, of both experienced artisans and beginners, of greater commercial value.

To look at this new movement from a practical point of view, a number of features might be kept in mind:

(1) Like Paris and New York, it seems inevitable that San Francisco should be a center for the decorative arts to which the world may turn as to a source for original ideas. What a goal to head for!

(2) If talented beginners were encouraged and supported in original creation, and if our merchants and manufacturers would lend their backing to local talent, there is no reason why such talent should not turn out work that would command the appreciation and support of local, and later wider-spread, "purchasing power." It is difficult to understand, for example, why some merchants send to New York for advertising artists when there is talent here. Some of the finest of the young European artists are not above doing fashion drawings. On the contrary! Local designers should profit by the cooperation of those most essential to the marketing of their wares.

(3) Already, there is much outstanding work being done in decorative arts which deserves the proper kind of publicizing. Publicity creates a

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The New Weaver

By Dorothy Liebes

The craft revival goes on apace, with countless weavers "looming" busily in its wake. The feeling today is one of creative renaissance in the field of decorative textiles, because, while weaving is one of the most ancient and widely known of the crafts, the point of view, creatively speaking, of today is quite changed.

From time immemorial, patterns or drafts for weaving were passed on through a family or through a guild, or a community, from weaver to weaver. Sections would become famous for one pattern, as did Paisley for the *Palmette* design, or Virginia for the *Whig-Rose*. Because a textile was fine in texture and color and design was reason enough for its being woven—an isolated thing, to be used where it may.

Today the weaver has new sources of inspiration for domestic textiles. First, the new architecture, with its conception of form and space, and the use of new building materials.

The contemporary interior architecture with its growing simplicity, the new lighting and heating of interiors provide new impetus to the weaver. Think of the inspiration given to the French weavers like Gennaire, Montereau, Helené, Henry and Rodier to weave for the liner S.S. *Normandie*.

The weaver realizes today that his textile must be related to its entire background as well as function. The textile may be created in relation to a cork wall, a wood surface, a chromium metal, a rough plaster, as well as texture and color of the floor surface.

The weaver cooperates with the architect to stress the horizontal—or the vertical—as desired, by pattern. He extends the wall surface or he opens it to filter the light through the window. He creates a texture to stress or subordinate other textures in the room.

The day of draperies which meet one at the front door has passed; the new conception in use of interior textiles is one decidedly beneficial influence of our interior decorators.

Color plays an important part, and the tendency today is for more and more use of what I call "distilled color," with subtle use of values to create a chromatic harmony in the room.

The second great impetus to the weaver today is the availability of new and interesting materials with which to weave. One must regard threads as one's palette—the paint with which to create the picture upon the warp. Age-old fibers—silk, linen, cotton and wool—still form the background of most fabrics, but in addition we have the countless synthetic fibers spun into thread. Cellulose, wood pulp, glass thread, leather threads, silver, gold, copper, solva threads, and innumerable chemically treated fibers. One can

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—*Photo Horace Bristol*

BLOCK-PRINT *by Helen Purdy.* FLOWER CONTAINER *by Roy Wehr.* BOOKENDS *by Marian Hurlbert.* CERAMIC *by Adele Wayland.* ASHTRAY *by Tom Shaw.* Shown at Amberg-Hirth Galleries.

Conditions Favor Western Craftsman

By MARIAN HARTWELL

A most favorable situation has recently been presented to the designers and craftsmen of the West! The immediate reason is the increased purchasing throughout the United States combined with a restriction of European sources of supply.

Within the last few years the modern mode of decoration passed through inevitable changes and was only gradually comprehended; but with its more perfect handling a demand for it has been created. This was greatly supplied by European production, beautifully standardized and favorable in price. Recently, however, unfavorable international exchange has made foreign purchasing almost prohibitive, and has forced dealers throughout America to seek new sources of supply in our own country, with the result that American designers and producers have led out on the New York market. Among these such a surprising originality in craft design has been presented from the western coast that attention has turned in this direction.

This stimulating condition was on the way before a change in the market gave it its break. Years of apprenticeship on the part of craftsmen have been spent to express the modern mode in decorative form. Centers of training, art groups, museums and shops have cooperated in varying degrees to develop this creative ability. These sources of outlet are now greatly stimulated, and the hour of the modern craftsmen seems to be at hand.

Under these conditions it is not surprising to see centers or shops exclusively devoted to the handling of modern decorative work springing up in the West as well as the eastern part of the United States. San Francisco is fortunate in possessing several.

The emphasis of modern art training and production is direct creation within the laws of given materials and ultimate function.

The force of this emphasis is hardly realized because it is evidenced in an international mode which shows mutual influence among designers and nations. This fact does not detract from it, but shows, rather, the level of experience reached in a fresh handling of material. Whether or not a designer reaches resolutions and produces forms which are in use is not of as great consequence as that forms should continue to be the result of creative experience, and that influences should continue to demand well-comprehended expression. The day of copying is in limbo so far as the modern designer is concerned.

The direct effect of demands and materials with a greater understanding of the play of forces has developed tremendous new possibilities in the field of design. As these are more fully appreciated inevitable divergence of character is bound to come, due to variation in human psychology and regional conditions. Obviously, this is the stuff out of which national and local design is coming.

San Francisco Art Association Bulletin
Published Monthly by The San Francisco Art Association
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Send material for Bulletin to San Francisco Art Association, Chestnut and Jones Streets, by 20th of each month.

There have been a number of requests from Eastern museums for early issues of the Bulletin. Members who possess old copies that they can spare will please send them to Dr. Morley, San Francisco Museum of Art.

Art Association to Seek New Members

Culminating a year of unprecedented achievement, the San Francisco Art Association is now turning its attention to the enlargement of its membership. It is its purpose to include within the organization all persons interested in the continued development of San Francisco as a Western Art Metropolis.

That the San Francisco Art Association is worthy of the public's full cooperation is amply demonstrated by its activities, which have gone steadily forward in spite of general financial difficulties. These accomplishments, due to the consistent backing of its comparatively small membership, have proven that its efforts were worth while. But this membership must grow to include all persons who have faith in the art and artists of our Bay district. The activities of the Art Association are too far-reaching and of too great a civic value to be borne by just a few.

The San Francisco Museum of Art has concluded its initial year with phenomenal success. It has housed some of the most important shows held in America, and the public's response has proven beyond all question the need that has been filled by these vital downtown galleries.

The California School of Fine Arts has maintained its enrollment, enlarged its faculty and increased its scope.

The Parilia is now an established San Francisco event of which any city in America might rightfully be proud.

Plans for the development of Montalvo are now being given the most serious consideration.

The artist membership of the San Francisco Art Association should include every serious artist in our district. We cannot conceive how any man or woman can repeatedly avail himself or herself of the privileges of exhibiting in the Art Association Annuals without assuming part of the burden that such exhibitions create. To throw this responsibility upon the shoulders of a few is too undignified and should not be tolerated by our Artists' Council. The Annual, repeated for 56 years, can grow to be of importance second only to the Carnegie. To attain this the full support of all our artists is necessary.

During the 62 years of its existence the San Francisco Art Association has stood for all that was conceived by its original founders. It is many years since it has called for new members and a sympathetic public should avail itself of this opportunity to be a part of the institution that has been responsible for so much of our city's cultural life. —M. R.

Information concerning application for membership may be obtained from Mrs. Ruby Adair, San Francisco Art Association, ORdway 2640.

Excerpt From S. F. Chronicle

"Concerning the 56th Annual itself Worth Ryder has some important ideas. In the current issue of the San Francisco Art Association Bulletin he answers some criticisms. . . .

"When Mr. Ryder says a true artist's business is to solve certain problems of materials beautifully and not to preach politics nor social reforms, many will applaud. There are also those who believe that a true artist's business is to confront the life of his time, exposing and interpreting its essentials as he sees them. The conflict between these two points of view is the major issue in the artistic life of our present day. An outsider on the side lines may be forgiven for suggesting that both attitudes have now, and always have had, equal validity."

—ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN.

California Creates

(Continued from page 2)

demand, and a demand is, quite naturally, what the creative artist must have.

(4) A demand for California's ideas would help to develop a market—bringing to us more of the supplies we need, sending out more of our wares—thus forming a greater incentive for further endeavors along the lines already so splendidly begun.

You may say, "We know all that. What of it?"

Ah, yes. But does the world at large know it? I doubt whether many people—aside from a few buyers who have within the past few years begun scouting trips out this way (due to the Hollywood ballyhoo)—realize that the new spirit so evident here is already forming the nucleus of a future center in decorative arts not only of great artistic merit but also of practical importance. And our designers should be able to profit by it. Let California show what it has and not be afraid to talk about it or to hold it up to comparison—in originality, beauty, and practicability—to the products of any other creative center. It need not blush!

S. F. Museum of Art to Hold Decorative Arts Exhibition

By Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley

Art is too large a subject to be confined to paintings on gallery walls or stone statues on architectural monuments. Art is living and vital when it is lived with, and it should be and, indeed, cannot but be a part of living. It is true, perhaps, that not everyone can hang on his wall a favorite painting, though even that is probably more possible with a little effort than most of us realize, and certainly a fine etching or a woodcut by one of our own artists is in the reach of everyone.

There is, however, another way of being at home with art: that is to be conscious of its rules and harmonies in the most ordinary things around us. In the way it is exemplified in our homes we are with it always. It is appropriate then that after a year devoted to painting, sculpture and the graphic arts the Museum should turn its attention to the more intimate ways in which art finds expression in our homes. The Exhibition of Decorative Arts is the first step in this direction, and it opens March 27th.

True to its policy of keeping the public in touch with what is significant and stimulating in the art of our time this exhibition stresses in every field the sound modern tendencies in furniture design, textiles, glass, metal as they are defined today. It attempts no prophecy for the future, no commentary, but it contents itself with saying: "The time of Louis XV had a definite style, and so did the Victorian period. This year of grace 1936 also has a style and these we believe to be sound examples of the feeling of our period in useful things with which and by means of which we live the life of our time."

Furniture in metal—comfortable, light, practical, a bit mechanically cold and precise as perfectly wrought metal is, but by that very fact in harmony with our logical mechanical age—is made human and livable and charming by skilful use of color and textured fabrics. You may have thought such furniture smart and you may have said, "It is good looking, but metal is too cold for my home." Not cold, when used rightly, quite as logical for some homes as it is already an accepted thing for offices and bars and public rooms.

But not only metal is modern. Wood, too, has its contemporary applications. One of the most interesting developments in contemporary cabinet work is the use of many woods, employing contrasts of color and grain instead of applied ornament for decorative effect. Examples of such furniture are included in the decorative arts exhibition. As in the metal furniture, the wooden pieces, too, by harmonies or contrasts, give an important role to color, very appropriately in a period as sensitive to color as ours.

Contemporary textiles, glass, metal work, ceramics—all illustrating the prevailing design feeling—are included in the exhibition. Much of the material is by designers and craftsmen of the Bay region or of California; some is hand work and custom made. Other pieces illustrate the well-designed commercial—even large-scale production—models and pieces carried by our local retailers. In other words, cost and rarity and even originality have not been the guiding principles of selection. Throughout, the examples have been chosen for their sound design, the practicality and serviceableness of the design in relation to its function, the appropriate use of technique and material in executing the design, the beauty of materials—often new synthetic materials—tastefully used, whether found in articles for the kitchen or the most exclusive jewelry, at all price levels. Perhaps the stress falls a little on the practical side, for most of the examples, because they are simple, functional, adapted to machine production are well within the means of everyone.

Though the Museum presents the material advantageously so that its design principles may speak for themselves and be easily understood even by those to whom contemporary feeling in this form is new, in a few cases more elaborate settings are provided to illustrate the combination of furniture with background.

Thanks are due to the many individuals and firms who have lent to the exhibition, and who have otherwise contributed so generously to assuring its success.

* * *

The New Weaver

(Continued from page 2)

weave anything that will interlace between the warp to give an interesting effect—even bridge cable if it were possible!

Because so few weavers have realized the textile possibilities of the new architecture and new threads our builders have sought in vain for the desired fabric. This may explain why so many architects' wives have taken to weaving, as, for example, Mrs. Eliel Saarinen of Detroit, Mrs. Schindler of Los Angeles, Anni Albers and Mrs. Steinhof of New York.

Here in the West we are exceptionally weaving-conscious, and it is a fact that three-fourths of the hand looms sold in the United States are in California. We must expect and look for a new directness and simplicity of design—effective use of good color, character and originality—not eccentricity.

Out of this interest and effort will come, I hope, something notable and fine in the field of decorative design.

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March Exhibitions in Local Galleries

Amberg-Hirth, 165 Post Street: Exhibitions of Arts and Crafts.

Art Center, 730 Montgomery Street: March 2 to 14, group show by members. March 16 to 28, oils by Geneve Sargaent.

California Palace of the Legion of Honor, Lincoln Park, San Francisco:

Contemporary American Water-Colors, Prints and Drawings, opening March 1st.

"The Prospectors" Exhibition (work of five Colorado painters), opening March 5th.

Monthly Art Exhibition by Californians, changing March 15th.

Porcelains from the Collection of Mrs. A. B. Spreckels, through March.

Old Master Paintings, through March.

Courvoisier: Miscellaneous paintings.

M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco:

U. S. Camera Show, through March 15th.

Etchings by Ernest Haskell, through March 29th.

Creative Art from the Primary Grades of the San Francisco Public Schools, opening March 16th.

Gump Galleries, 250 Post Street: March 9 to 21, water colors by Rosebud Lane. March 23 to April 4, joint exhibition of paintings and prints by Eula Long and Brooke Waring.

University of California, Museum Building. Through March, painting and sculpture by members of the faculty and students of the university. Sponsored by English Club.

San Francisco Museum of Art, Civic Center

Decorative Arts Exhibition: March 19 through April 30. Furniture, textiles and ceramics assembled and installed to demonstrate the functional beauty of contemporary design in furniture and interiors.

Exhibition of Paintings by Ernest Fiene: March 25 through April 30. German-born American artist whose work already hangs in the permanent collections of many great American museums.

Fifty-sixth Annual Exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association: Closes March 8.

Indian Blankets of the Southwest: February 27 through March 15. Fifty examples of early Indian weaving from the collection of Mrs. Helen G. Gibson.

S. F. Museum of Art Lecture Courses

Advanced Art Appreciation: Six lectures by Miss Claudia Davis, Wednesday evenings at 7, beginning March 18. Fee, $2.50.

Cathedrals and Churches of the Old World: A series of six lectures to be given by Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley to meet Tuesday afternoons, beginning March 10, 1936. Fee, $2.50.

Decorative Arts: Monday afternoon series opening March 9 at 2:30. Fee, $2.50. Tuesday evening series opening March 24 at 7 p. m. Fee, $2.50.

Augustin S. Macdonald, an old life member of the San Francisco Art Association, has recently presented some rare etchings to the libraries of the Universities of California, Stanford, Santa Clara, Mills College and the San Francisco College for Women.

Dr. Maximillian Toch, internationally known chemist and scientist, will be a San Francisco visitor during March. He is particularly known to artists because of his research and books on pigments. He is an authority on the authenticity of old masters, uses violet-ray and X-ray photographs as part of his method of detecting spurious works of art, and has been consulted by the most important museums in the United States. While here he will be the guest of Edward De Witt Taylor.

The students' traveling exhibition from the University of Hawaii is now hanging in the gallery at the California School of Fine Arts.

The work was assembled by Mr. Henry H. Rempel, of the University of Hawaii.

A recent press clipping from the Islands reports the interest our students' show occasioned there. A letter from Mr. Rempel declared it was "unanimously voted the best student show exhibited in this academic year."